

CPYRIGHT

Burchill Replies

FOIAb3b

Your editorial, "The Revisionists," was a rather intemperate attack on a modest study paper which I published last March under the title, "Chinese Aggression — Myth or Menace?" The purpose of the paper was to show how it was possible, partly because of incomplete information, and partly because of nationalist bias, for reasonably honest Chinese and Americans to view recent historical events in very different lights.

Apart from the personal attack on my professional competence and intellectual honesty, your editorial attacks three judgments which I suggested that our opponents might make from the events of 1950:

That the government of Syngman Rhee suffered a defeat in the election of May, 1950. This is not only a judgment which the Chinese might make; it was the judgment of the United Nations Commission which supervised the elections and monitored the campaign and which concluded that "The two leading parties in the old National Assembly suffered a heavy defeat, losing 70 per cent of their strength in the Assembly."

That John Foster Dulles had used American aid as a lever in the attempt to unite the newly-elected Assembly in support of the President, Syngman Rhee.

Of course Dulles didn't threaten to cut off American aid if the Assembly failed to support Syngman Rhee; he only made it plain that continuance of that aid depended on how the Koreans in general, and the Assemblymen in particular, behaved themselves. Meanwhile, as L. M. Goodrich puts it in Korea, a Study of U.S. Policy in the United Nations: "The Administration in Washington — since it saw no reasonably satisfactory alternative to the Rhee regime, it was unwilling to risk the uncertainty which would follow its discrediting and defeat . . . To promote this evolution, the United States had powerful means at its disposal in the form of economic and military assistance." In fact, the \$110 million of U.S. aid earmarked for Korea for the year ending June 30, 1950, was persistently delayed, the presidential signature not

and only a trickle of the funds having been released at the time of Dulles' speech to the Korean Assembly. Few members of that Assembly can have had any doubts as to the meaning of his message.

That doubt exists as to whether the North or the South Koreans attacked first on June 24-25, 1950. Official statements of North and South Korea conflict. No impartial observer was able to confirm either version. The Security Council, which could and should have investigated, refused to permit an investigation and accepted without corroboration the South Korean version. Of course a doubt exists; even Professor Fairbank, whose opening sentence your editorial quotes, in his *Foreign Affairs* article, October 15, 1950, makes no attempt to deal with this doubt, or to determine who started the war. No historian of integrity can reach a definite conclusion on this point until more evidence than the propaganda statements of the governments involved is available.

Syngman Rhee's broadcast to his fellow-countrymen of the North on May 6, 1950, indicated a definite intention on the part of the South Korean government to attack the North, in a campaign to be coordinated with an "all-out rising" of sympathetic northerners directed by the South Korean radio. He had already pledged himself in the previous December to secure the unification of Korea, by force if necessary, before the end of 1950. I think it very doubtful that he actually attempted his proposed attack; that more probably the North Koreans launched an ill-advised preventive war in anticipation of his attack; but the evidence to support either view is inconclusive.

C. S. BURCHILL,

Study Group on China Policy,
Vancouver, Canada.

Editor's Note: Mr. Burchill's article contained the following sentence: "John Foster Dulles flew to Korea, and on June 19 addressed the South Korean National Assembly, pledging continued American aid, but only if Syngman Rhee's minority government continued in power." John Foster Dulles did not say a word in this speech about predicating American aid on the continuation of the Rhee government.